**Murton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Working Party**

**Report to the Parish Council**

**July 12th 2017**

1. **Questionnaire 2**

As reported to the Parish Council at its last meeting, June 14th 2017, the second questionnaire, written for the village and its immediate surroundings only, had a response rate over 80%.

The questionnaires are still being analysed. The quantitative data has been analysed and an analysis of the comments should be ready within the next few weeks.

1. **Neighbourhood Plan report**

There are, at present, here key issues to resolve or study before we can make further progress.

1. ***The boundary of the Parish.***

We are still trying to get information from the City of York Council about the timetable for decision making.

1. ***The examiner’s report on the Upper and Nether Poppleton Neighbourhood Plan***

This is the first such report concerning a parish within the City of York boundary. It is important that we study this in detail.

The examiner’s report can be found using the url:

<https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/13410/examiners_report>

The Council’s post examination report can be found using the following url:

<https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/13409/councils_post_examination_decision_statement>

1. ***The Local Plan and ST6***

We are awaiting final decisions about the Local Plan as it wends its way through consultations with land owners and a myriad of Council committees.

The Local Plan Working Party will soon make recommendations based on the latest version of recommendations from the officers. ST6 (land between Grimston Bar and Murton Way) remains the most important decision to be made ***that in our parish.***

In the latest agenda for the Local Plan Working Party, offices have written a simple and helpful historical summary:
Officers produced a publication draft Local Plan in autumn 2014. This process, however, was halted by Council resolution on the 9th October 2014. Following the Local Government Elections in May 2015 the agreement between the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups, to establish a joint administration for City of York Council from May 21st 2015 states that: ‘We will prepare an evidence-based Local Plan which delivers much needed housing whilst focusing development on brownfield land and taking all practical steps to protect the Green Belt and the character of York.’

The absence of an adopted Local Plan, given the expectations embodied in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) puts the Council in a much weakened position when development proposals come forward for undeveloped areas of the city. In the absence of a Local Plan, development proposals fall to be considered on a case by case basis assessed against the national policies. This gives rise to a high risk of Page 9 ad- hoc provision of housing developments through appeal rather than through the City’s own strategic planning, and an increased risk of challenge to the Council’s interpretation of national policy in the Courts. For example, York presently relies on the saved policies in the Regional Spatial Strategy which shows the general extent of the Green Belt – the City must assess individual proposals without the benefit of further Local Policy to inform which areas are more suitable than others for development within that general extent. In development management decision making, when weighing factors in the planning balance, the City is also disadvantaged when seeking to justify protecting land within the general extent of Green Belt, as a national policy compliant 5 year housing supply cannot be demonstrated.

The complete report from the officers can be found using the url:

<http://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/g10364/Public%20reports%20pack%2010th-Jul-2017%2017.30%20Local%20Plan%20Working%20Group.pdf?T=10>

There is a section on ST6:

A small number of responses support the general principle of development on the site for employment uses.

Noting the potential impact of development on this open and visually prominent site, and the likely substantial traffic adding to congestion/air pollution, a number of respondents object to the site’s allocation including Heslington Parish Council and Fulford Parish Council.

Historic England object to the site given the risk of serious harm to the special character and setting of York, which it would not be possible to mitigate They consider it will harm a number of elements identified in heritage topic paper as key to the historic character and setting of York. The topography of the site (slope of terminal moraine) makes any development on site particularly noticeable in views from A64 particularly travelling south. Will reduce gap between A64 and edge of City to 250m and cause considerable harm to views towards eastern edge of city. Would harm relationship between York and Murton.

Representation received from developer/landowners. Support the employment allocation but promoting larger mixed use site. Propose an alternative site boundary, returning to previously submitted boundary (Site reference 181). Landowners remain willing to discuss the appropriate extent and mix of development in the context of the need for the Local Plan to provide more housing land, a greater range of small and medium sized housing sites and options for employment development to meet future as yet identified development needs. In the alternative, the site should be excluded from the green belt and identified as safeguarded land to provide flexibility in the longer term. They state that they have removed the northern part of site from the proposal due to prominence to A64. A1079 already heavily influenced by built and other commercial development and provides a good opportunity for a viable mixed use site.

**The site has been considered by the technical officer group and this has confirmed that access to the site could be a showstopper. It would be difficult to introduce a new signalised junction given the distance to Grimston Bar roundabout. The site would therefore require a new access off A64 which may make development of this scale unviable. It is not considered that the site could be made larger to potentially increase the viability of the site due to the significant landscape/heritage concerns given prominence of views from A64 and the topography of the site. Officers consider that the site should be removed as an employment allocation given the transport showstopper identified.**

***If this recommendation is upheld, it removes arguably the most difficult decision we have to face.***

**Cllr Warters will be able to bring the Parish Council up-to-date with the discussions at the Local Plan Working Party on ST6 and on ST7, the housing site adjacent to our parish.**